



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY ENLISTED RECORDS AND EVALUATION CENTER  
8899 EAST 56TH STREET  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46249-5301



AHRC-EB

16 June 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, US Army Aviation Center, Fort Rucker,  
Alabama 36362

SUBJECT: Review and Analysis for Career Management Field (CMF) 15  
(Aviation)

1. Reference: Memorandum, HQDA, DAPE-MPE-PD, 1 June 2005, Subject: Memorandum of Instruction for the FY05 CSM/SGM/SMA Selection Board.
2. In accordance with the above memorandum, the selection board reviewing records for Aviation submits this Review and Analysis to assist you in executing your duties as the CMF proponent.
3. Competence Assessment.
  - a. Performance and Potential. The panel is confident the very best NCOs were selected for promotion and schooling. The panel focused on the most current NCOERs to determine the NCOs overall performance and demonstrated potential for increased responsibility. Outstanding performance for extended periods of time in MOS related leadership positions such as First Sergeant, Operations NCO and ATC Chief were viewed as key indicators and favorably considered in the evaluation process. Assignments as Battalion Command Sergeant Major and other related MOS positions above the NCO's current grade were also viewed as a plus and as key indicators of potential for increased responsibility; however, it should be noted that average performance in one of these positions was viewed by the panel as less than favorable when compared with an above average performance in a position commensurate with the NCO's current grade (e.g., a performance and/or potential rating in the "2" or "3" block as a Battalion Command Sergeant Major was not viewed as favorably as a performance and/or potential rating in the "1" block as a 1SG, etc.). Most NCO's have served in one or more deployments in a combat zone. The board did not penalize NCOs who had not deployed to a combat zone; however, the evaluations of NCOs that had deployed tended to have stronger bullet comments which the board favorably considered in the selection process. There were ample leadership opportunities in CMF 15 for panel members to select the best qualified for promotion and schooling.

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b. Utilization and Assignments.

(1) Overall, most NCOs are seeking high risk jobs and performing well. NCOs serving in special duty jobs should return to leadership positions within their MOS at the end of the normal tour. Outstanding performance in positions such as Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, Inspector General and Equal Opportunity Advisors were viewed favorably by the panel; however, prolonged service and/or repetitive service in any position outside the NCOs MOS was not considered to be as indicative of potential as those mentioned in the subsequent paragraph. NCOs assigned to Recruiting Command continue to receive average to slightly below average NCOERs. The panel did not unfairly penalize NCOs in this situation. Diversity of duty assignments and duty locations (CONUS and OCONUS) was favorably considered by the panel.

(2) There is a lack of assignment diversity with a few NCOs in CMF 15. Some have career patterns that are replete with assignments away from their MOS while others have repetitive assignments within their MOS. It was not uncommon for NCOs in the first group to have as many as six to eight consecutive years away from their MOS. Favorable consideration was given to those who consistently performed successfully in leadership positions and/or assignments within their MOS. It should be noted, that while Instructor/Writer and other such positions are within an NCO's MOS, prolonged or repetitive assignments in this area combined with other MOS immaterial assignments such as Drill Sergeant, placed the individual at risk for promotion.

c. Training and Education.

(1) Across the board, NCOs have aggressively pursued civilian education. Most NCOs have one or more years of college with many holding Associate and/or Bachelor degrees. The awarding of a degree and/or 60 plus hours was considered more favorably than a year of college with no degree. NCOs whose performance was consistently outstanding and where there were limited opportunities for civilian schooling were not penalized by the panel. Soldiers should be encouraged to take full advantage whenever possible to get their degree either through classroom participation or education online.

(2) NCOs who exceeded the standard (e.g., Distinguished Graduate, Honor Graduate, etc.) at ANCOC, Battle Staff, First Sergeant Course and other military schools usually performed well in their duty assignments. Excellence in military schools generally translated to outstanding performance in the field. Graduation from the Sergeants Major Academy was considered a plus. It should

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be noted, success in the NCOs MOS was weighted significantly more than success in military and/or civilian schooling.

d. Physical Fitness and Appearance.

(1) APFT failures and failure to meet AR 600-9 standards for height/weight were the exception; however, there were a number of NCOs that significantly exceeded (more than 30 pounds) the height/weight tables but passed body fat standards. In such situations, it would have been helpful to the panel if rater comments indicated the NCOs ability or inability to perform his or her duties. A significant number of NCOs had APFT scores above 270. Earning the Army Physical Fitness Badge was a plus. Raters should ensure excellence in physical fitness is annotated on the NCOER.

(2) IAW AR 640-30, the majority of official photographs were taken within the last five years; however, there were still too many photographs of poor quality and with rank insignia not commensurate with the individual's actual rank. There were a surprising number of violations regarding the wear and appearance of Army uniforms and insignia (AR 670-1). This was clearly an indicator of little or no attention to detail on the part of the individual taking the photograph and little or no leader involvement in the actual shoot or review of the finished product. With the Enlisted Selection Board System (ESBS) in place, panel members are able to enlarge specific areas of the photograph, making it even more imperative that NCOs and their chain of command ensure only quality, accurate and current photographs are submitted to the board. Violations included but were not limited to wearing unit awards/citations not individually earned, wearing ribbons in the wrong order of precedence, visible tattoos while in Class A uniform (unless authorized), poorly fitted uniform, etc. The photograph is usually the first thing a board members sees and is the initial impression as they assess your file; therefore, ensure your uniform fits properly, know the regulation and take someone with you to the photo shoot ... its that important. The panel took into consideration instances where lack of facilities and/or opportunities due to deployments/combat operations limited some Soldiers ability to update their photo; however, those instances were few. Missing photos in situations where there was ample opportunity to get one was viewed by the panel as apathy on the part of the NCO.

e. Total Person Concept. The Aviation NCO Corps is strong. To remain competitive, NCOs must continue to do the things that set them apart from their peers (e.g., repetitive successful leadership assignments, attendance at Battle Staff, exceeding the standard in military schooling, current and accurate

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photograph, etc.). Overseas assignments and time in deployed units while serving successfully in leadership positions was a plus.

f. Overall Career Management of Aviation NCOs. The panel consensus is that CMF 15 is effectively managed. It is the responsibility of the NCO, his/her branch manager and the Proponent to ensure all have the opportunity to serve in tough leadership positions.

#### 4. CMF Structure and Career Progression Assessment.

a. MOS compatibility within CMF 15. MOSs 15P/Z are properly aligned with duty positions and are properly structured to facilitate career progression.

b. Assignment and Promotion Opportunities. All assignments in CMF 15 provide excellent opportunities for success. The most heavily weighted standard used by the panel were comments from senior raters on the NCO's performance and potential in leadership assignments commensurate with grade and MOS. Justifiable and objective comments were the most useful in determining best qualified for promotion and schooling. Successful assignments in positions above an NCO's grade were viewed as strong indicators of potential to lead at the CSM/SGM level.

c. Overall health of CMF 15. The panel felt strongly that CMF 15 is healthy and will continue to be a vital part of the Army. NCOs are well trained, fully educated and are clearly executing their duties with the utmost professionalism.

#### 5. Recommendations.

a. Competence. NCOs are technically and tactically proficient; however, continue to improve the assignment process to ensure repetitive tours outside the MOS are minimized and equally distributed throughout the force. Attendance at Battle Staff should be encouraged and/or required.

b. Rater. Raters do a good job justifying ratings with bullet comments; however, there remains room for improvement. NCOERs with "excellence" ratings in all five categories are rare and should continue to be reserved for only the "cream of the crop" (AR 623-205, para 3-13). This is a good thing and sends a powerful message to the panel. The majority of NCOERs have "excellence" ratings in two or three categories and were viewed as very competitive by the panel. Raters should put the strongest bullets first – they will stand out and send a clear message. Include references to Audie Murphy, Sergeant Morales, Army Physical Fitness Badge and other equivalent awards/honors on the NCOER.

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c. Senior Rater. Senior rater comments continue to be too subjective, inflated and often do not justify performance or potential ratings. For example, a bullet comment, "promote with peers" is not consistent with a performance and potential rating in the "1" block. With the vast majority of NCOERs with words to the effect, "Promote now" or "Promote immediately", it becomes increasingly difficult for the panel to differentiate those that should be promoted from those that should not be promoted. Objective comments such as, "the best of 6 1SGs in the battalion" or "the best 1SG I have had the privilege to work with in 20 years of service" were vastly more useful than comments such as, "outstanding performance as a Platoon Sergeant". "Will be an outstanding CSM" or words to that effect send a strong message to the board and should continue to be reserved for only the very best. Simply put, block 5c/d/e is the most heavily weighted portion of the NCOER. Always use precise language ... eliminate fluff/filler bullets. A single bullet that accurately justifies the rating block is better than several bullets that say nothing. Senior rater trends and responsibilities should continue to be emphasized to officers and senior NCOs at every opportunity (e.g., Professional Development classes, career courses, pre-command courses, etc.).

d. Reviewer. Reviewers must do a better job executing their duties IAW AR 623-205. Accuracy and completeness of NCOERs (duty description, MOS, duty title, etc.) must get better to ensure only the very best are selected for promotion and schooling. Although rare, there were some instances where the reviewer did not agree with the rater and/or senior rater evaluation. In all cases, the reviewer comments sent a clear message to the panel members on that individual's fitness for promotion/schooling and was very helpful to the panel.

e. Official Photographs. NCOs must do better ensuring their photograph is current regardless of the date taken (e.g., no sergeant first class photographs for the CSM/SGM). The panel was surprised at the number of photographs not IAW AR 670-1. Clearly, more emphasis needs to be placed on quality control (e.g., chain of command involvement, educating NCOs and photo lab technicians, etc.).

f. Disciplinary Action. NCOs should make every effort to remove old disciplinary action from their file. Disciplinary action was a significant discriminator in evaluating an NCO for promotion/schooling. AR 600-37 and AR 27-10 contain guidance on transferring Article 15s and letters of reprimand from the performance portion to the restricted portion of the OMPF.

g. Letters to the Board. Don't send letters to the board merely to draw attention to your file. Only send letters to provide new and pertinent information.

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If you think you need to send a letter, let your chain of command and your career manager review it first. There were few instances where letters to the board had any impact on the final vote. Whenever possible, use the ERB as a method of conveying new and pertinent information to the board.

#### 6. CMF Proponent Packets.

a. Overall Quality. The CMF Proponent Packet was well prepared and useful to the panel in the overall selection process. Especially useful was the guidance from the Branch Chief outlining his priorities for determining best qualified for promotion. The panel used the information provided by the Proponent to develop the panel standards that were used to determine best qualified for promotion/schooling.

b. Recommended Improvements. Aviation Proponency Office continue to make the Proponent Guidance available to all NCOs and that all NCOs familiarize themselves with it and use as a mentoring tool when counseling soldiers.

#### 7. Other.

a. Duty Description. Be specific ... clearly state OIF/OEF participation from a deployed location in the duty description. Ensure duty MOS is correct. Too often it was difficult for panel members to determine if the job was a 40 or 50 level position. The Proponent Guidance (Career Path) is a useful tool in determining duty MOS/title.

b. Enlisted Record Brief. Validate your ERB. The ERB is a very useful tool used by the panel to compare Soldier's assignment history with Proponent Guidance (Career Path). It was also used as a quick reference to determine level of military/civilian education and awards/citations. Due to numerous deployments, no Soldier was penalized for not validating his/her ERB. Updating the ERB should be an ongoing process and not a last minute event. Take advantage of the My Promotion File link featured on the EREC website. This link accesses the Army's automated Enlisted Selection Board System (ESBS) and allows Soldiers to review, update and validate their records via the internet when they are eligible for a board.

c. Closeout. If authorized under AR 623-205, get a closeout NCOER.

d. Values. Any "no" on the values portion of the NCOER was viewed by the panel as a significant discriminator.

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8. Conclusion. It was an honor to serve Aviation as the Panel Chief on the FY 05 CSM/SGM/SMC Selection Board. The panel believes it selected the "cream of the crop" for promotion and schooling. Chain of command involvement in all aspects of the promotion/schooling selection process (e.g., quality/accurate photographs, opportunities for diverse and challenging assignments in leadership positions, detailed/justified comments and block checks on NCOERs, updated ERBs, etc.) is important. The most effective and heavily weighted tool available to the panel members is the NCOER. Senior leader involvement in the preparation and the mentoring leading up to the finished product will ensure raters and senior raters do the best job possible differentiating between those that should be promoted from those that should not be promoted. Raters, senior raters and reviewers must continue to make the tough call when writing and reviewing NCOERs. Unlike the OER, the NCOER has no fail-safe mechanism to prevent inflation; therefore, it is incumbent on raters, senior raters and reviewers to ensure they are precise in the language they use to convey information. There are few responsibilities more important to the health of our Army than the proper use of words to accurately describe those who are best qualified to lead our Soldiers at the highest level of the noncommissioned officer corps.

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